

Every day. **In times of crisis.** For our future.



Sabita was eight months pregnant when the earthquake struck on April 25, 2015. A month later, her baby girl, Phurpu, was born at an emergency health camp run by Save the Children. The two still live in a temporary shelter where, Sabita says, the hygiene and baby kits we gave her have enabled her to maintain her personal health – and care for her thriving daughter. *Photo: Save the Children*

Save the Children's Earthquake Response in Nepal: A Special One-Year Progress Report April 2016

A MESSAGE TO OUR DONORS

It has been a long and difficult year. But throughout the year, Save the Children has committed itself to providing relief, response and recovery support to children and their families quickly and efficiently. I am proud that we have now assisted close to 600,000 children and adults.

Children are undoubtedly the most vulnerable during an emergency, and it was no different when multiple earthquakes struck Nepal last spring. Children's lives were shaken beyond their comprehension, education came to a standstill and the overall wellbeing of our girls and boys was under threat.

Save the Children plunged into action less than 24 hours after the April 25 earthquake, providing lifesaving relief materials; distributing food, shelter and hygiene kits and operating health clinics. Our strong relationships prior to the earthquake helped us respond swiftly to community needs. We were also disaster-ready, with prepositioned stocks of relief materials. After the first phase of our emergency response, we provided warm clothes, blankets and cash support to thousands of families to help them meet challenges posed by monsoons and the harsh winter.

To keep children safe from possible abuse and trauma, we set up child-friendly spaces within a week of the first earthquake. This was followed by temporary learning centers complete with clean drinking water and toilet facilities. These centers ensured many, many children did not lose out on education. We also provided training to teachers so they were better equipped to help children overcome loss and psychological scars.

Nepal has now transitioned into the reconstruction phase, and Save the Children will be there to support the government and affected communities with safe housing, education and better livelihood options. As always, we remain committed to helping children grow to their full potential, learn and be protected.

As we look ahead to continuing to create a difference in people's lives, I would like to thank you, our donors, who provided the team in Nepal with the resources necessary to fulfill our humanitarian mandate. The results we achieved would be impossible without you.

My sincerest thanks!

Delailah Borja
Nepal Country Director



Save the Children Country Director Delailah Borja (right) welcomes a USAID administrator to Nepal.

Photo: Egan Hwan/Save the Children

ONE YEAR AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

The 7.8 magnitude earthquake that crumbled buildings and shattered lives on April 25, 2015 was the worst natural disaster to strike Nepal since 1934. The death toll reached almost 9,000 and more than 22,000 people were injured. Additional damage occurred when a 7.3 magnitude aftershock was felt on May 12.

In the 14 worst-affected districts, over 600,000 homes were destroyed and another 280,000 badly damaged. Schools were also hit hard. Over 28,000 classrooms were destroyed, meaning more than 7,000 schools must be rebuilt. The earthquake brought down 1,227 health facilities and left 2 million people in urgent need of water, sanitation and hygiene support.

An estimated 3.2 million children were displaced and directly affected, both physically and psychologically.

Initial Response (April 25 - June 30, 2015)

Preparedness and planning helped Save the Children launch a response within the first 24 hours. Trained national staff were immediately deployed, and pre-positioned stock in four locations in Nepal helped save many lives. The response was fortified by the deployment of our experienced surge capacity teams, which provided specialized expertise.

During the initial response, we focused on the most urgent humanitarian needs, such as temporary shelter and essential relief materials. Within the first month, we acquired and moved more than 3,000 metric tons of emergency relief supplies to our areas of operation.

Relief and Early Recovery (July 1 - 31 October, 2015)

During the second response phase, access became difficult as landslides and monsoon rains cut off roads to many communities in high, mountainous areas. Despite the challenges, we reached out to affected communities with multipurpose cash distributions, enabling people to purchase things to meet immediate needs.

Key relief and response activities and community mobilization were implemented with and through local NGO partners and in coordination with local government.



"This was my school," laments 10-year-old Diliya sitting among the ruins in Baguwa village, Gorkha district. More than 7,000 schools were damaged or destroyed.

Photo: Inge Liel/Save the Children

Recovery Phase and Transition to Development (November 1, 2015 - April 2018)

Our priority during the current phase has been the relief and recovery needs of communities at high altitudes and in remote locations. For example, our teams carried out a large and complicated winterization project in the remote mountains of the Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk districts, ensuring families in those communities had essential amenities to survive the winter and stay warm.



When impassable roads made it impossible to reach remote areas with vehicles, we distributed shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene supplies after transporting them by helicopter.

Photo: Sandy Maroun/Save the Children

Our reconstruction efforts will now focus on *building back better* through programming that supports the government and local organizations as they work to reduce risk for children and communities. We will concentrate on lessons learned and incorporate risk-reduction elements into all our programs. Specifically, we will work to make sure children and their families have safer homes. There will also be programs to help affected families recover their livelihoods so they can confidently support their children's health, education and nutritional needs. Above all, we will partner with affected communities and the government to make sure children have safer schools with adequate water, sanitation and hygiene services.

SAFER HOMES FOR SECURE FAMILIES

Though a year has passed, thousands of families are still living in temporary shelters, and thousands more are at risk because they continue to occupy damaged homes. Families have started reconstruction, but many are using poor building practices due to a lack of technical knowledge on safe construction. Without proper shelter, a majority of the affected population, particularly children, are vulnerable to ill health and disease, exposure and insecurity.

Response and Preparedness

Save the Children provided unconditional cash grants to 4,772 families to enable them to make essential purchases during the 2015 monsoon season. More than 9,900 families living at high altitudes and in hard-to-reach villages benefited from the distribution of shelter kits, including corrugated galvanized iron sheets, ridge sheets, nails, rope and tie wire, as well as shelter tool kits (shears, hammer, hand saw, hoe and shovel) that helped them transition into better temporary shelters. This was followed by winterization support to 15,480 families in remote communities through the provisions of cash grants or vouchers for winter supplies.



Reconstruction and Technical Training

Our goal is to assist 6,000 earthquake-affected families with financial and technical support that will help them rebuild safer homes – “build back better” – and to create mass awareness to enhance resilience and preparedness. This will also revitalize local economies by increasing the demand for safer construction through a pool of trained masons, carpenters and artisans. To that end, we are currently training 6,000 masons. Additionally, 2,000 young people will receive vocational training in construction-related skills.



Pregnant at the time of the earthquake, 25-year-old Dhanmai lost her house and her possessions. Her new son was born four months later in a goat shed in her village of Gumba, which sits 8,562 feet above sea level. In the winter, Gumba experiences below-freezing temperatures and can be covered by as much as two feet of snow. Yet Dhanmai had only a few blankets for the baby and her other two children. As part of our winterization program, we provided her family with blankets, trousers, mufflers, woolen caps and mats, among other essential supplies. In all, 18 rounds of helicopter drops were carried out to supply winter kits to families in high-altitude areas. *Photo: Save the Children*

Challenges and Looking Forward

One of our most pressing challenges is the constraint of time, as reconstruction should be in full swing before the monsoons in July-August 2016. However, international organizations such as Save the Children have had to navigate a changing and complex bureaucratic system in Nepal in order to gain the required approvals to begin shelter support. The second challenge is a communications gap between the government and the communities, which has resulted in a lack of interest and response among communities in enrolling in the government-funded reconstruction program. Finally, there is an issue of sufficient budget. Even though an average house in rural Nepal costs the equivalent of at least \$5,000 - \$6,000, the maximum support people can expect to receive from the government to rebuild their damaged homes is less than \$1,900. International organizations such as Save the Children are currently required to follow the amount set by the government so as to not cause inequalities between communities.

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Education in the Post-Earthquake Environment

The Nepal earthquake destroyed or significantly damaged nearly 7,000 schools. This left one million children without permanent classrooms, and an additional half a million who required support to return to a structured learning environment. Although schools in earthquake-affected districts officially reopened on May 31, 2015, much work remains to be done. The Ministry of Education has highlighted the need to ensure a strong commitment to recovery and reconstruction, as children are still in a very vulnerable position.



Back to School in Temporary Learning Centers

To encourage students to return to school, we provided direct support to over 193,000 girls and boys through the construction of temporary learning centers. Schools were supported with education materials and teaching-learning kits, and back-to-school bags were provided to children who lost their school supplies in the earthquakes.

Working together, Save the Children and our partners built 586 temporary learning centers in nine of the most severely affected districts. Of those, 451 were winterized to protect children from harsh temperatures and wind. Additionally, as part of our winterization efforts, more than 3,000 children in the remote district of Rasuwa received warm clothing.

Many of the centers we constructed have now been handed over to the communities.



Capacity Building for Teachers

To help instructors manage classrooms in a post-emergency situation, we trained 3,395 teachers in nine districts to provide students with psychosocial support to minimize trauma. We also taught them to effectively use post-emergency teaching and learning materials and to create engaging classroom sessions. In addition, we trained 40 teachers in Healing and Education through the Arts (HEART) to help children express their feelings through drawing and other activities.

Looking Forward

The education sector in Nepal stands at a crossroads. A large number of schools not only have to be rebuilt, but have to be built back better and safer. Save the Children is now focusing on assisting schools in meeting the government of Nepal's Prioritized Minimum Enabling Conditions using our tested participatory Quality Learning Environment Tool. The tool will help schools and teachers improve students' emotional and psychological protection and physical safety/protection, create an active learning process and improve learning outcomes, as well as bringing about close collaboration between schools, parents and communities. We will also work with schools and communities to expand their capacity to respond to future disasters. Additionally, in partnership with other stakeholders, we will develop a model approach for Comprehensive School Safety in the education sector.



First-grade students enjoy their noon break. Save the Children supported their government-run primary school to open again by training teachers and providing teaching materials.

Photo: Sandy Maroun/Save the Children

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

One of the most significant struggles for many communities was disruption of water supplies and a lack of safe drinking water. It is estimated that 46 percent of the water supply systems (11,288 in total) in severely affected districts were damaged. In addition, damaged toilet facilities in approximately 220,000 households impacted an estimated 1.1 million people.

Following the earthquakes, much of the affected population relocated to temporary shelters in areas where it was relatively easy to provide safe drinking water. However, most people have now moved back to their original locations where they face acute challenges with regard to water and sanitation, straining their limited resources. Access to sanitation remains limited, as people are just starting to rebuild their houses.



Initial Immediate Relief

Save the Children distributed vital supplies and provided technical support to communities and institutions to ensure immediate relief for children and their families in eight districts. The support included hygiene kits, water kits, and water tanks, pipes and fittings, as well as technical expertise for quick fixes to water supply systems, water purification solutions and temporary latrines. At the same time, we also implemented hygiene promotion activities to raise awareness on maintaining basic personal hygiene. These key messages, intended to prevent health problems, were disseminated through printed materials; door-to-door and community campaigns and local participatory activities.



hygiene kits distributed to
135,010 individuals



community water supply
systems repaired reaching
39,829 individuals



latrines constructed
offering better sanitation
to 26,905 members

Challenges and Looking Forward

Save the Children will work to ensure water is affordable and accessible to every child and their families. Likewise, we will work with schools and health facilities that already had significant gaps

in water supply, sanitation and waste disposal facilities. One challenge will be to ensure quality facilities are an integral part of the reconstruction of schools and health centers.

We will work closely with government and local communities to link water and sanitation services and infrastructure with Shelter, Education, Child Protection and Health services to ensure integration of proper facilities, activities and awareness. Our focus will be on reconstructing water facilities and latrines in schools and health facilities and on promoting good hygiene.

PROTECTING CHILDREN

The earthquakes posed a serious threat to the safety of children, as disasters tend to increase risks such as abuse, child labor, exploitation and violence due to breakdowns in legal and community systems and loss of livelihoods among families. After the earthquakes, the Nepal Central Child Welfare Board identified 40,036 at-risk children of whom 35,220 were separated from their families. Our response programming reached across sectors and services to ensure vulnerable children and their families were aware of and had access to security, health, psychosocial support and law enforcement services.

Child-Friendly Spaces

We established 61 child-friendly spaces immediately after the initial earthquake to ensure safety, security and emotional support for children and provide them with safe water and sanitation facilities. More than 6,126 children attended the spaces. Activities based on gender and age encouraged children to express themselves by playing, learning and socializing with their peers. Two hundred forty-six facilitators were trained to oversee this engagement.

We also established 24 playgrounds for children, providing outdoor games and play materials such as swing sets, slides, seesaws and sandboxes.



Psychosocial First Aid

Save the Children trained more than 20,000 community members, including members of Village Child Protection Committee (VCPC), teachers, children and parents on Psychological First Aid, a practical method for providing initial support and counseling to reduce stress for people in crisis situations. The VCPCs learned to identify cases that needed immediate attention, after which a protective “circle of friends” could be formed around vulnerable children to support them. With community involvement, we are supporting 518 such cases.

Looking Forward

We will continue to prioritize working with local child protection committees so protection cases are identified and vulnerable children supported.

HELPING FAMILIES STAY HEALTHY

The April 2015 earthquake destroyed or damaged 1,227 health posts, over 90 percent of them government hospitals, clinics and primary health care centers. Responding to urgent health-service needs, Save the Children set up mobile camps in 24 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in two of the most affected districts of Sindhupalchowk and Rasuwa, helping more than 2,000 children and their families. Mobile clinics were expanded to remote VDCs in Dolakha district, reaching an additional 1,700 households. To get health services up and running, we provided large tents to 20 health facilities in four districts as part of our initial response.



Bimala, 27, visits a local health post set up by Save the Children a month after the first earthquake. Photo: Bijay Gajmer/ Save the Children

Outpatient Therapeutic Centers, Mother-Baby Areas and Case Management

Forty-nine outpatient therapeutic centers were established to provide quality nutrition evaluation services and treatment for severely malnourished children from 6 months to 5 years of age. We also set up 26 mother-baby areas to offer a safe, secure and healthy environment where lactating mothers can breastfeed their babies and learn about good feeding habits and healthy cooking techniques. In addition, we carried out screening of children under 5 to identify severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition.

Equipment Provided To Health Facilities

We distributed infection prevention kits, outreach-center kits and basic equipment to 31 health facilities in five affected districts. We also provided Female Community Health Volunteer kits and baby kits to health facilities to enable them to offer the best possible care, especially to infants and young children.

Semi-Permanent Health Facilities under Construction

The large number of damaged health facilities is an extra burden for community residents and pregnant mothers. Supporting health service recovery is a priority for Save the Children. The

construction of 18 semi-permanent health facilities in 18 VDCs in Gorkha, Sindhupalchowk, Dolakha, Nuwakot and Rasuwa is currently underway.

Community Involvement

To help children and families cope with stress and trauma, we worked with community mobilizers who were constantly involved in providing emotional support through counseling to local communities. These service providers reached more than 40,000 people in five districts. They were also involved in counseling pregnant women and mothers on feeding practices for young children.

Challenges and Looking Forward

The major health challenge now is to deliver the support committed to in affected communities as the 2016 monsoon approaches with its risk of waterborne diseases. As health service interventions always coordinated through the government, delays are expected in receiving necessary approvals. We also anticipate challenges in transportation and distribution due to the difficult topography. Save the Children has prioritized support for five districts (Gorkha, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Sindhupalchok and Dolakha) based on their health and nutrition district recovery plans.

SECURING FOOD AND DIVERSIFYING LIVELIHOODS

Devi received a conditional cash grant that she will combine with her own funds to start a business rearing goats. We also taught her to create a business plan and shared other skills needed to run a successful enterprise. Smiles Devi, “I used to think goats were only good for making curries during festivals.” She is hopeful that her first business venture will yield a profit so she can contribute to household expenses and save some money for the future of her soon-to-be born child.



Emergency Food Assistance

Save the Children supported 2,552 households in two of the worst-affected districts with food baskets (rice, lentils, oil, wheat flour, salt, tea, spices) for a month immediately after the April earthquake. Paying special attention to the nutritional needs of children, we also provided

micronutrients to 18,432 children from 6 to 23 months of age. Plus, we supported the registration process for distribution of essential food to more than 100,000 households.

Agricultural Support

To help families continue their agricultural livelihoods and overcome their losses after the earthquakes, we distributed sacks of rice seed to 34,900 households in eight districts. Metal bins for safe seed storage were distributed to 1,625 households in Gorkha.

Multi-Purpose Cash Grants

During the early recovery phase, 10,385 households in three districts were supported with multipurpose cash grants to enable them to fulfill their immediate food and non-food needs. In Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk districts, 4,749 extremely poor households received \$150 each, while 5,635 households with higher recovery capacity in Dolakha and Gorkha received \$75 each to meet urgent requirements.

Restricted Cash Support for Small Businesses

Save the Children provided conditional cash grants to 384 business people in three target districts to help them reestablish their income stream. Businesses in remote wards received grants of \$300 to restock goods and repair/rebuild their shops.

Challenges and Looking Forward

Seasonal monsoons posed a significant challenge to our work by reducing road access and making it difficult to reach remote regions. In addition political unrest leading to border closures affected the supply of goods, including fuel, and led to an increase in the price of essential goods and services. Also, in some districts, there was political pressure for blanket coverage of households in our recovery plans. However, Save the Children, our partners and local leadership developed a community-managed beneficiary selection criteria so as to target only the most vulnerable households.

Looking ahead, we aim to support 4,000 of the most vulnerable households to help them protect and diversify their livelihoods. This will be done through conditional cash transfers using the cash-for-work approach, as well as through restricted cash transfers for recovery, improvement and diversification of household livelihoods. Long-term plans include supporting farmer organizations and village savings and loan associations, as well as building market-access capacity to ease financial and marketing difficulties for affected communities.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Save the Children established monitoring and accountability standards at the outset of the response to ensure quality in the delivery of services and programs. As always, we take responsibility for the standards we set and regularly report on successes and findings against targets. Any challenges or issues that arise in the field with our teams, local government or implementing partners are quickly checked and addressed to correct any issues.

Children's Satisfaction

Children's voices and level of satisfaction are important to Save the Children during any emergency response program. To understand children's expectations and needs after the earthquakes, we carried out a child consultation survey in the 14 most-affected districts in partnership with Plan International, UNICEF and World Vision and in collaboration with the government. Based on responses, interventions and the delivery of programs were reviewed to keep children at the center of the response.

CONCLUSION

Our earthquake response intervention set out to reach 600,000 affected people over a three-year period, of whom half would be children. Ninety-eight percent of that target was reached within the first year, and the number of children we helped has already surpassed the targets for our responses in education, protection, health and nutrition, temporary shelters and livelihoods options. Support will now focus on meeting the long-term needs of children and their families, which include safe and permanent schools for children and safe, permanent houses for families.

The substantial progress we achieved in Nepal during this first critical year was made possible by our donors' compassion and the involvement of hundreds of expert Save the Children staff. Our work continues and will for the next two years, thanks to you and to everyone who showed extraordinary generosity when children needed us the most.

On their behalf, thank you!



Photo: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children



Save the Children invests in childhood – every day, in times of crisis and for our future.

In the United States and around the world, we are dedicated to ensuring every child has the best chance for success. Our pioneering programs give children a healthy start, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. Our advocacy efforts provide a voice for children who cannot speak for themselves. As the leading expert on children, we inspire and achieve lasting impact for millions of the world's most vulnerable girls and boys.

By transforming children's lives now, we change the course of their future and ours.